



June 25, 2018

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
 Chair, Appropriations Subcommittee on
 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies
 U.S. Senate
 Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tom Udall
 Ranking Member, Appropriations Subcommittee
 on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies
 U.S. Senate
 Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Murkowski and Ranking Member Udall:

The National Association of State Foresters would like to bring your committee’s attention to a program many state forestry agencies find tremendously valuable. The Joint Fire Science (JFS) program, which is funded through the Interior Department’s fire budget (and up until Fiscal Year (FY) 2017, through the Agriculture Department’s Forest Service as well), provides the data we need to rate fire danger, make seasonal wildfire forecasts, and cost effectively reduce the risk of wildfire through fuels management and prescribed fire.

In addition to helping state forestry agencies prepare for wildfire events, the JFS program also generates scientific data used to manage smoke from wildfires and develop remote sensing tools for wildfire management. The program is administered in conjunction with the Interior Department and Forest Service and routinely allows us to partner across agencies and programs to leverage resources.

The 15 regional Fire Science Exchanges funded by the JFS program provide trusted, science-based information to land managers and owners throughout the country, that in turn, enables sound policy and on-the-ground decision-making related to wildfire, ecosystems, and hazard risk reduction.

The Fire Science Exchange Network distinguishes itself from other federally supported wildfire research programs in its emphasis on direct application. Members of the network convene workshops, field tours, webinars, and conferences, and in many states, work directly with wildfire managers to ensure management needs and questions are met and answered with scientific research.

Executive Director
 Jay Farrell

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The nation’s 59 state and territorial foresters support robust funding for this program, provided it does not come at the expense of programs of key importance to the nation’s State Foresters. The association also recommends that the JFS program’s priorities be driven by state and federal line officer requests and as part of a feedback loop that responds to their management needs.

With these caveats, I'd like to reiterate the tremendous value the JFS program provides the wildfire suppression and management community and urge you and your colleagues to ensure robust funding for this program.

Sincerely,

George Geissler
NASF President
Washington State Forester

Executive Director
Jay Farrell

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